

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. I work in a high school and we teach students about the importance of the media and of the availability of balanced information to the people of a democracy. This one-sided approach is what I would expect in China or in the former soviet Union. Please do the right thing by either insisting that these channels not air this program or by insisting they air a program of the same length from the other point of view. Perhaps Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 9/11? That would be democratic and fair.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. The issue is not about "local programming" but about local and diverse OWNERSHIP. Thank you.